REVIEWS.

COMMENTARIES ON THE LAW OF INSURANCE. By Charles Fiske Beach, Jr. Boston and New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co. 1895. 2 vols. pp. cxxviii. 606, xx. 944.

In works on Insurance it is customary for authors to discuss the authorities freely, and to present their own views. From this custom, founded perhaps in the fact that this branch of law is of comparatively recent development and has been consciously affected by the views of merchants and of Continental jurists, these volumes by Mr. Beach depart as widely as possible. His text is largely composed of full extracts from recent judicial opinions, reprinted without comment. Even when he states propositions of law in his own language, he gives no discussion. An author thus modestly effacing himself — not attempting to trace the growth and modification of doctrine, not explaining the reasons underlying the law, and refraining from criticising and comparing decisions — appears to make a mistake when he entitles his volumes "Commentaries"; but the quotation marks enclosing the greater part of Mr. Beach's text frankly and accurately describe his work, and thus make it impossible to base a hostile criticism upon the misnomer.

From what has been said it is obvious that these volumes cannot serve as the student's introduction to Insurance, or as the practitioner's most valuable source of knowledge, but that persons already thoroughly acquainted with the history and principles of Insurance and with the famous leading cases may find here an easy method of supplementing their knowledge by reading liberal extracts from recent opinions.

E. W.

HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN CONSTITUTIONAL LAW. By Henry Campbell Black, M. A. St. Paul, Minn., West Publishing Co., 1895. pp. xxiv. 627. (Hornbook Series.)

This book has decided merit. The author is frequently dogmatic concerning points upon which one would be inclined to differ with him. For instance, he says that "the construction of a system of sewers . . . in a city . . . is not a public purpose as regards the people of the State at large." To one writing in Massachusetts, the reasonable language of the Supreme Court here upon this very point instantly occurs. "Everything is a public use," say they, "which tends to enlarge the resources, increase the industrial energies, and promote the productive power of any considerable number of the inhabitants of a section of the State." Talbot *v.* Hudson, 16 Gray, 417, cited in Kingman et al., Pet'rs, 153 Mass. 566, as the ground of the decision in the latter case in favor of State aid to a metropolitan sewerage system. That a large part of such a handbook should be dogmatic in order to brevity will be admitted by every one; but students of the branch of constitutional law which involves this question of what is a public use, and, it may be added, students also of the question as to what is a taking of property, are entitled, even in the briefest handbook, to learn that there are two schools upon such important questions, — and Mr. Black does not supply that information. And so it is of one or two other moot points. For instance, the view of the minority in the Slaughter-House Cases on the meaning of the word liberty